

Comp CG_Cameron_CP_20240725_ Investigation
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Investigation Report

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Customer: Space Exploration Technologies Corp.
Customer Number: CN602867657

Regulated Entity Name: STARBASE LAUNCH PAD SITE

Regulated Entity Number: RN111606745

Investigation # 1995473

Incident Numbers

| | |
|--------|--------|
| 417437 | 413823 |
| 413825 | 409766 |
| 417436 | 419227 |
| 414164 | 425155 |
| 413826 | 413964 |
| 409769 | 413821 |
| 413818 | 409765 |

Investigator: JONATHAN DIAZ

Site Classification INDUSTRIAL MAJOR

Conducted: 07/25/2024 -- 07/30/2024

SIC Code: 3761

NAIC Code: 336414

Program(s): WASTEWATER

Investigation Type: Compliance Invest File
Review

Location: LOCATED ON S SIDE OF THE EASTERN
TERMINUS OF SH 4 BROWNSVILLE TX 78521

Additional ID(s) WQ0005462000

Address: ,

, ,

Local Unit: REGION 15 - HARLINGEN

Activity Type(s) WWCRR - WW Compliance Record
Review
WWCMPL - WW Complaint

Principal(s):

Role

Name

RESPONDENT

SPACE EXPLORATION TECHNOLOGIES CORP

Contact(s):

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| Role | Title | Name | Phone | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------|-------|------------|
| NOE CONTACT | MANAGER ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY AFFAIRS | MS Katy Groom | Work | [REDACTED] |
| REGULATED ENTITY CONTACT | MANAGER ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY AFFAIRS | MS Katy Groom | Work | [REDACTED] |
| REGULATED ENTITY CONTACT | SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY ENGINEER | Carolyn Wood | Cell | [REDACTED] |
| REGULATED ENTITY MAIL CONTACT | MANAGER ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY AFFAIRS | MS Katy Groom | Work | [REDACTED] |

Other Staff Member(s):

| Role | Name |
|--------------|---------------------|
| QA Reviewer | MONICA GALVAN |
| Investigator | ESMERALDA RODRIGUEZ |
| Supervisor | MONICA GALVAN |
| QA Reviewer | ESMERALDA RODRIGUEZ |
| Supervisor | JAIME GARZA |

Associated Check List

| <u>Checklist Name</u> | <u>Unit Name</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| WQ FILE/RECORD REVIEW | SpaceX Launch Pad |
| WQ COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION | SpaceX Launch Pad |

Investigation Comments:**INTRODUCTION**

On August 6, 2023, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Harlingen regional office received a complaint alleging Space Exploration Technologies Corp. Starbase Launch Pad Site ("Facility") was discharging deluge water without TCEQ authorization. In total, the Harlingen region received 14 complaints alleging environmental impacts from the Facility's deluge system (Consolidated Compliance and Enforcement Data Systems (CCEDS) incident nos. 417437, 413823, 413825, 409766, 417436, 419227, 414164, 425155, 413826, 413964, 409769, 413821, 413818, and 409765). These complaints are associated to this investigation. Upon receipt of the initial complaint, the TCEQ Harlingen regional office began coordinating with TCEQ's Office of Water, Water Quality Division, to determine applicability of potential storm water or industrial wastewater permitting requirements. Additionally, the TCEQ actively monitored use of the Facility's deluge system during this time, communicating with the Facility, Office of Water, EPA and complainants.

On July 25, 2024, TCEQ Environmental Investigator, Jonathan Diaz, conducted an in-house compliance record review investigation of the Facility to document the compliance with Industrial Wastewater permitting requirements. The Facility is a private launch site located on the eastern terminus of Boca Chica Boulevard on the south side of State Highway 4 (SH 4), Brownsville (Cameron County), Texas.

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The Facility operates under Customer Number (CN) 602867657 Space Exploration Technologies Corp. The Facility is associated to pending Industrial Wastewater Individual Permit Authorization Number Water Quality (WQ) WQ0005462000. In addition, this Facility operates under Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Construction Stormwater General Permit (CGP) TXR150000 individual permit authorized under TXR1515PQ and TPDES Multi Sector General Permit (MSGP) TXR050000 individual permit authorized under TXR05GD61. This Facility is a source for some of the criteria pollutants under the provisions of Industrial Wastewater Permitting.

Daily Narrative

In a letter dated July 1, 2024, the TCEQ Water Quality Division, Applications Review and Processing Team, acknowledges the successful completion of the Industrial Wastewater Individual Permit Application for Starbase Launch Pad Site (RN111606745). The application reference number is noted as 664613 and authorization number as WQ0005462000 (Attachment A).

The July 25, 2024 investigation was conducted to determine compliance with the Industrial Wastewater permitting requirements and the pending wastewater permit number WQ0005462000 for the discharge of non-process deluge system water that is utilized during launch operations.

During the investigation conducted for the Facility on July 25, 2024, it was documented that the Respondent failed to obtain authorization to discharge industrial wastewater into or adjacent to any water in the state, in violation of 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE 305.42(a) and TEX. WATER CODE 26.121(a)(1). Specifically, the Respondent has been operating Starbase Launch Pad Site and discharging industrial wastewater without proper authorization. Industrial wastewater was discharged without a TPDES permit on March 14, 2024, April 5, 2024, May 8, 2024, and July 26, 2024. On March 13, 2024 EPA Region 6 issued an Administrative Order, Docket Number: CWA-06-2024-174, that captured the discharges up to March 13, 2024 (Attachment B).

Exit Interview

No exit interview was conducted during this investigation.

GENERAL FACILITY AND PROCESS INFORMATION

Space Exploration Technologies Corp. operates Starbase Launch Pad Site, a private launch site with a water deflector system. The Industrial Wastewater Individual Permit Authorization was obtained to discharge non-process deluge system water that is utilized during launch operations. Discharges from the Facility are expected to contain total dissolved solids, nitrate-nitrogen, phosphorus, total dissolved solids, sulfate, chloride, fluoride, aluminum, cadmium, chromium, copper, cyanide, and zinc. Wastewater will be treated by reusing deluge and pretreatment when required.

Starbase Launch Pad Site serves as a site for rocket launch activity of SpaceX Starship-Super Heavy launch vehicle. Discharge water will consist of minor amounts of deluge water not captured by the containment area during vehicle launch activities, deluge water captured by the containment area in retention pond and stormwater (Attachment A).

BACKGROUND

Starbase Launch Pad Site is identified in the TCEQ Central Registry as Regulated Entity Number RN111606745 and is owned and operated by Space Exploration Technologies Corp. which is identified as Customer Reference Number CN602867657. The regulated entity has a performance classification of "Unclassified" and a compliance history rating of "o". The customer has a performance classification of "Satisfactory" and a compliance history rating of "o.40". Based on the file review, the compliance status of the facility was determined as specified below:

Current Enforcement Actions

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Based on the information provided, the Facility is in violation of the provisions of 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE 305.42(a) and TEX. WATER CODE 26.121(a)(1). The violation has been described in the Violation Detail Section of this report.

Agreed Orders, Court Orders, and Other Compliance Agreements

Additional information can be obtained from the Compliance History Report (Attachment C). There are no Court Orders or compliance agreements for this CN.

Complaints

There has been one Air Quality complaint in the past five years.

Including this investigation, there have been fourteen water quality complaints against this facility.

Prior Enforcement Issues

Refer to the Compliance History Report (Attachment C).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Conclusions and Recommendations

The regulated entity submitted a New Industrial Wastewater Individual Permit Application on July 1, 2024.

During the course of the investigation, the complainant was provided a copy of our complaint policies and procedures by referring them to the TCEQ's complaint website <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/compliance/complaints>.

A Notice of Enforcement (NOE) letter will be submitted to the entity for the violation described in this report.

Additional issues

No additional issues were discovered during this investigation.

NOE Date: 8/2/2024

OUTSTANDING ALLEGED VIOLATION(S) ASSOCIATED TO A NOTICE OF ENFORCEMENT

Track Number: 887204

Compliance Due Date: To Be Determined

Violation Start Date: 6/26/2023

2D TWC Chapter 26.121(a)(1)
30 TAC Chapter 305.42(a)

Alleged Violation:

Investigation: 1995473

Comment Date: 08/01/2024

During a record review investigation conducted on July 25, 2024, it was documented that the Respondent failed to obtain authorization to discharge industrial wastewater into or adjacent to any water in the state, in violation of 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 305.42(a) and TEX. WATER CODE § 26.121(a)(1).

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Specifically, the Respondent has been operating Starbase Launch Pad Site and discharging industrial wastewater without proper authorization. Industrial wastewater was discharged without a TPDES permit on March 14, 2024, April 5, 2024, May 8, 2024, and July 26, 2024. On March 13, 2024 E.P.A. Region 6 issued an Administrative Order, Docket Number: CWA-06-2024-174, that captured the discharges up to March 13, 2024.


Recommended Corrective Action: The Facility shall submit an individual permit application to the TCEQ Water Quality Division in order to obtain authorization to discharge industrial wastewater into or adjacent to waters in the state.

Signed


Environmental Investigator

Date 08/02/2024

Signed


Supervisor

Date 8/2/2024

Attachments: (in order of final report submittal)

- ☒ Enforcement Action Request (EAR)
☒ Letter to Facility (specify type) : Notice of Enforcement
 Investigation Report
☐ Sample Analysis Results
☐ Manifests
☐ Notice of Registration

- ☐ Maps, Plans, Sketches
☐ Photographs
☐ Correspondence from the facility
☒ Other (specify) :

Attachments